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NOTE

# *Brachystegus decoratus* (Turner) (Hymenoptera: Sphecidae), an Indian wasp new to Sri Lanka

In my revision of the Sri Lankan Nyssoninae (1985. Smithsonian Contributions to Zoology 414, 43 pp.) I reported that the Indian *B. dubitatus* (Turner) and *B. basalis* (Smith) occurred in Sri Lanka and suggested that other Indian species might be found subsequently.

While in Sri Lanka during 1997 I had an opportunity to examine the Hymenoptera collected in paddy fields by Channa Bambaradeniya. He is working on his doctorate in the University of Peradeniya and is studying the biodiversity in a paddy field ecosystem.

Among his hymenopterans was a female of *Brachystegus decoratus* (Turner), a species described in *Nysson* from a pair collected in Coimbatore, Madras State, India (1914. Annals and Magazine of Natural History (8)14: 254). Bambaradeniya collected the Sri Lankan specimen at Batalagoda, Kurunegala District on 20 June 1996. He was using a sweep net to collect insects from the bund covered with weeds during the period when the paddy field was flooded and the plants were in the early reproductive stage. He did not note any wasps digging in the soil of the bund, but at other times had seen wasps entering holes or crevices in the soil.

*Brachystegus decoratus* runs to couplet 6 in my key to species (1985) which separated *B. dubitatus* and *B. basalis*. The following modified key will separate the three species.

6a. Basal two-thirds of second abdominal tergum with much of surface covered with small punctures separated by half a puncture diameter among which are interspersed larger punctures separated by more than a puncture diameter; paired pale posterolateral spots on abdominal terga 1–4 (and 5 in ♂) white to creamy yellow and separated from each other by the width of the spot or more . . . . . *B. basalis* (Smith)

– Basal two-thirds of second abdominal tergum with most of surface covered by small, subcontiguous punctures and only a few scattered, larger punctures; paired pale posterolateral spots on abdominal terga 1–5 bright yellow and separated from each other by less than the width of the spot . . . . . 6b

6b. Wings infuscated; integument black except a pair of small yellow spots behind ocelli and paired yellow spots on abdominal terga 1–5, markings on terga laterally covering most of dorsum of terga 1 and 2; base of dorsal surface of abdominal tergum 1 densely silvery tomentose . . . . . *B. decoratus* (Turner)

– Wings hyaline except apex of forewing narrowly and anterior third of marginal cell infumated; legs and base of first abdominal segment light red; paired yellow markings on abdominal terga 1–5 more separated and narrower, covering only half or less of dorsum; base of dorsal surface of abdominal tergum 1 with thin silvery tomentum . . . . . *B. dubitatus* (Turner)

Karl V. Krombein, *Department of Entomology, National Museum of Natural History, MRC 165, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560-0165, U.S.A.*